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LGBTQ+ Equality Includes Equal Access to Family Building

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Fertility benefits have made headlines in recent years with more and more companies offering financial support to assist their employees with family building. Fertility care is reproductive care that involves treatments like egg freezing and in vitro fertilization (IVF). They may include family-building programs like gestational surrogacy and adoption—but they don't always, and when they do, the dollar amount is often much less than the services designed for heterosexual couples. The fact that companies offer fertility assistance at all is progress. After all, these benefits are a relatively new concept, introduced a decade ago when a few large technology companies began offering egg freezing in an effort to attract more women to their workforce. But there is still much work to do, especially as it relates to the LGBTQ+ community, because there is no LGBTQ+ equality without equal access to family building.

“Without the financial support of my employer, I may not have been able to have my family.”

In April my husband Wesley and I became adoptive dads to our beautiful daughter Olivia thanks to the financial support of my employer, Lyft, where I lead our global benefits program. Lyft offers surrogacy and adoption programs through Kindbody as part of its inclusive reproductive care and family-building benefits program. As an adoptive child myself, I always knew I wanted to be an adoptive dad, but when you are part of a same sex couple, a family requires much more than dreams. Most same sex couples will require fertility or adoption services to have a family. Without the financial support of my employer, I may not have been able to have my family.

Not every company can offer financial support for inclusive family building, but every company can do something. Benefits leaders can begin by taking stock of what benefits are in place. Does your company offer fertility benefits and, if so, are there restrictions to care? If your company requires a medical infertility diagnosis, which can only be obtained by heterosexual couples, it excludes the LGBTQ+ community. Adding family-building benefits that cover all paths to parenthood does much more than create inclusive workplaces; there's a solid business case to do so.

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Family-building benefits save companies money by controlling healthcare costs.

LGBTQ+ employees are increasingly choosing to build their family through surrogacy and adoption. Clinically-managed family-building benefits, like Kindbody, control the end-to-end fertility experience which leads to a successful singleton pregnancy faster, with fewer pre-term births, and ultimately lower healthcare costs. Our benefits partner, Kindbody, also offers surrogacy and adoption coaching and care navigation to support LGBTQ+ family building that ultimately helps navigate employees to a successful outcome faster, also saving on costs.

An inclusive benefits offering boosts recruiting efforts and helps keep top talent.

Today's employees are savvy about fertility and family-building benefits and are making career choices based on the companies that offer them. Almost 70% of employees would switch jobs to gain family-building benefits and 81% of employees would stay at their company longer if their employer offered them.

There is no workplace DEI without LGBTQ+ benefits parity.

An essential part of an equitable benefits program is that people have access to build their family however they want, without having to have an underlying diagnosis of infertility. In fact, nearly 60% of benefits managers believe it would be a discriminatory HR policy to offer fertility coverage only to employees diagnosed with fertility issues.

LGBTQ+ equality is not possible without equal access to family building. As an employer, be the change and establish workplace policies that support all of your employees regardless of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status. Benefits leaders can speak up and work together to accelerate change in the workplace, and in the world, where all people can realize the family of their dreams.



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